



Commissioner's Column

Magazine Galvanizes Law Enforcement

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In December 1976, four pages typed on an IBM Selectric typewriter and stapled in the corner became the first newsletter prepared by the Department of Criminal Justice Training. Eleven subsequent editions through February 1978 contained general information about DOCJT classes, meetings, anniversaries, new hires and retirements. The responsibility for this publication belonged to one secretary.

By April of 1983, the newsletter moved to tan-colored paper and blue ink, expanding the contents to include events, meetings and classes conducted around the state. Five years later, the newsletter once again evolved, this time into a single folded sheet mailed to all who attended DOCJT training. By 1989, "Training Notes," as the newsletter was called, added photos and legal updates. This version continued until 1996 when the newsletter — converted to "FYI" — was again revamped to address the evolving needs of Kentucky law enforcement.

The Kentucky law enforcement community was undergoing progressive changes in the mid-1990s. Standards outlining hiring and selection practices, and ultimately the way training was delivered to more than 8,000 police officers, became part of sweeping legislative reforms. DOCJT's role changed as well, and the department was expected to play a role in keeping police executives and officers informed about changing issues, legislation and technology. Much more information needed to be shared, many best practices that could serve across the state needed to be profiled and community leaders needed to understand how Kentucky law enforcement worked under the new state regulations.

The natural progression of law enforcement practices dictated that a newsletter was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of DOCJT, the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet or the policing community. In 2001, the premier issue of the award-winning "Kentucky Law Enforcement" was developed and published by DOCJT. The newsletter format was abandoned in favor of a magazine designed to deliver more information. Rooted in those past

newsletters, the magazine was tasked with covering law enforcement news in the state, legal updates, technology, class information, law enforcement programs and progressive leadership from the Big Sandy to the Mississippi. Of particular focus were contemporary issues facing law enforcement in Kentucky and information that officers at all levels could find practical, helpful and informative.

Ultimately, a communication office was assigned the function of collecting and creating the publication along with numerous other projects. That full-time attention led to a quarterly publication that has captured numerous local, state and national awards for design, writing and photography over the past 10 years. Since the first edition, numerous features have been published about Kentucky law enforcement across the states. Ten police agencies have been profiled as well as 64 chiefs and 41 sheriffs. The magazine has steadily evolved in design, photography, reporting and circulation, not only among Kentucky's elected officials, law enforcement officers, and others in the criminal justice system, but also into other states and at the federal level. This has helped establish the reputation of Kentucky's well trained, organized and professionally-administered law enforcement agencies.

The magazine today is the 41st edition and with its pass along practice, reaches well over 12,000 readers. The magazine is also available online and its spin-off, "Kentucky Law Enforcement Dispatches," an electronic newsletter with up-to-date information between issues, reaches more than 9,000 opt-in subscribers.

A story appearing on page 20 of this edition provides a more extensive overview of the 10-year evolution of "KLE," as most of us now know the magazine. Each issue reflects their professionalism and commitment to delivering information of use to the Kentucky law enforcement community. 📄